THE HISTORY OF A LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN GERALD," "THE RIGHT OF WAY," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

Mr. Roper seemed to be full of regret the next morning that he had promised to go up town. He saw that Euphemia was nervous, and ought not to be left alone, especially as she seemed to be troubled with apprehensions that had never assailed her before.

After a few minutes of deep reflection, he looked at her across his coffee-cup, and said, "I am going to bring your mother back with me, Euphemia, if I can persuade her to tear herse f away from London in the very middle of the season; but I really think you ought to have some one with you whilst I am away. Mrs. Weston is a very kind, friendly person, from all I hear; why not call upon her this morning, and ask her to spare you her daughter for a couple of days?"

"I don't like Miss Weston."

"No? I am surprised at that, too. My bailiff talks as if she were an angel of goodness and beauty."

"That would never have been my verdict, certainly. However, he may be the best judge. But let her be ever so good and charming, I would much rather be alone than have her here."

"But there is the vicar's daughter."

"Has he a daughter?"

"He is a widower, with one child."

"How old is this child?"

"I really do not know, but quite young. She would not be much of a companion for you, I am afraid; still, she would be better than none at all."

"What is the vicar's name?" inquired Euphemia, after a long pause.

"I really did not catch it, and was ashamed to ask. Walker mumbles his words frightfully. However, you will an opportunity of finding out to-day, I fancy, for he told me he would call upon you especially. I wish him always to come to you about the charities; and I will give you 'carte blanche' to do as you like, so that you can settle everything together this morning."

"Should you tuink it too much if I dedicated a hundred a year for that purpose?"

"Oh, dear, no? out of an income of over three thousand pounds we ought to be able to spare that."

A sudden flush passed over Euphemia's face. If Mr. Roper gave this sum into her hands annually for the poor, she might distribute a portion, and eke it out with dainties from the kitchen, so as to get a reputation that would satisfy him that his wife was doing all the good he had intended, and yet be able to make up the deficiency in her own income by helping herself largely from this.

To rob the poor was a terrible sin, but Euphemia, having decided to keep her wretched secrets to herself, was driven to all kinds of unholy expedients to evade detection.

In times gone by, she would have regarded such an act as this with utter abhorrence; but now the thought of escaping from her pressing difficulties by such an easy method, brought a transient flush of satisfaction to her pale face.

Mr. Roper saw that he had pleased her by this proposition, and was infinitely delighted with his own happy thought.

"Well, then, it is settled," he said, "only you are to be sure and ask his little girl to stay here, whilst I am away. It would be a real treat to the child, you may be sure, and innocent prattle would keep you amused."

"I think I will take your advice. But you will only be away one night, I suppose?"

"Not more, certainly. If I put things in train a little, your father will be able to manage very well without me."

"I hope so; only in case the vicar should not call this morning, I can not go to his house, and ask him myself."

"I shall be going past there presently, and will call, to make sure. If he has no objection to the arrangemen, I can bring the child back with me, and he can come and fetch her to-morrow evening, and stay to dinner."

"That would be a very good plan," answered Euphemia, cheerfully. "She would, perhaps, be unsettled if she saw him this first day."

Finally, this was decided upon, and Mr. Roper left.

Euphemia was conscious of an odd feeling of excitement she could not at all account for, as she awaited the arrival of the vicar's little daughter. She could settle to nothing.

She opened a book, but only to throw it down directly. She tried to sing, but her voice sounded harsh and discordant even to herself, and she went to the piano, and took up her tapestry frame. When she found that she had been working in yellow wool instead of pink, she became disgusted with this, also, and took to wandering up and down the passage as a last resource.

Finally she heard Mr. Roper's voice on the stairs, and another voice answering him—a voice sweet and clear, and fresh, like a bird's. Euphemia darted down to meet them, and without stopping to analyze the instinct that prompted her to such unusual demonstrativeness, held out her arms.

Mabel was not naturally shy, and it was evident, too, that Euphemia's fancy was fully reciprocated, for the little creature kissed her cordially.

"Are you the lady he" (pointing to Mr. Roper) "has been talking about coming along?"

"I expect so. You will not be afraid to stay?"

"No; I think I shall like it," nodding her head sagaciously. "How many rooms have you got in this house?"

"About thirty."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed little Mabel, gleefully; "and Mr. Roper says I may see them all. We've only got seven in our house; and there is a little hole in the roof of my room, where you can see the sky; and sometimes a star peeps in, and I like it, but I don't like the rain; and it is really shameful!"—assuming a womanly air—"that our landlord won't undertake any repairs."

"Only, then you wouldn't see to the star," said Mr. Roper, watching his wife's delight, curiously; "and very likely it comes on purpose to have a peep at you."

Euphemia was quite absorbed in the little creature, and watched and waited for every word with strange eagerness. She had never cared for children before, and yet Mabel had only to appear, to take her heart entirely by storm. She took her on her lap presently, and played with her long, shining curls, comparing them with her own, appearing to grudge a single second that the child was out of her sight.

"You seem to have taken a wonderful fancy to Mabel," said Mr. Roper, who, to tell the truth, felt rather jealous of this sudden passionate preference.

Euphemia looked at him and smiled—a very sweet, sad smile.

"She is such a darling! Look at her, George."

"She will be quite spoilt before night."

Mabel, who had been listening intently to this brief dialougue, shook her head decidedly.

"Papa always pets me when I am good. He says it doesn't spoil good girls; he says, too, the closet is the only place for naughty ones."

"But you are never naughty, Mabel?" inquired Euphemia, tenderly.

"Only sometimes. I was naughty the other day, only I did not mean to be."

"I told Bessie Weston I didn't want her for my mamma. The people in the village said she was to be, and I thought I had done without a mamma so long, it didn't signify now."

Mr. Roper had just left the room to give some orders about his journey, and the two were alone.

"How long has your mamma been dead?"

"I don't know."

"Haven't you asked your papa?"

"Sometimes; but—but he won't tell."

"No?"

"I do not think he knows himself."

"But he could not help it very well, love; only, perhaps, the subject is so painful he can not bear to talk about it. Some day, when you are older, I dare say, he will tell you everything."

"And then I never saw my mamma; so it is not so bad, is it?"

"Have you never seen her portrait?"

Mabel shook her head.

"There's no pictures in our house. I like them very much; but papa is too poor to have fine things. When I grow up, I mean to have faces with gold frames round them on all the walls, the same as you've got here; and red velvet chairs to sit upon, and thirty rooms in the house, so when it is wet, and I can't go for a drive in my carriage, I can run from one to the other, and amuse myself so."

"My dear little girl," said Euphemia, softly, "do you know riches never help people to happiness?"

"I thought all rich people were happy. Old Mary says so."

"Who is old Mary?"

"She is our housekeeper."

"She is a poor ignorant woman, no doubt; and having, perhaps, suffered from poverty herself, fancies that it is the greatest evil under the sun. If she had had any real sorrow, however, she would know better."

Mabel turned suddenly upon Euphemia, with her keen, bright eyes full of inquiry.

"Have you ever been unhappy?"

"More miserable than any other woman in the world!" exclaimed the other, involuntarily; and she held Mabel closer against her, and hid her face in the shining curls. "More utterly wretched than you can, or ever will be able to conceive, I hope."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Most Married of Women.

[Smyrna (Del.) Times.]

Benjamin Abbott, one of our old citizens, died in this town Saturday last in the eighty-second year of his age. He was a nephew of the celebrated Rev. Benjamin Abbott, the great Methodist revivalist of the early part of this century, and came to this State from New Jersey when a young man and settled in the "Neck" east of this town, where his active life was mostly spent. But the notable feature in Mr. Abbott's otherwise uneventful life is the remarkable fact of being the seventh husband of his widow who survives him.

This much-talked-of and much-published event, (for it went the rounds of the press of the Nation,) when he for the second and she for the seventh time bowed before the altar of Hymen occurred on June 30th, 1875, he then being seventy-eight and she eighty-two years old. Mrs. Abbott's history in the marital relations of life stands perhaps without a parallel in the records of the country, and tradition has it there is to be yet another. It is currently stated without contradiction that some years ago she had a vision in which eight men stood before her in a peculiarly impressive manner, which she has ever regarded as prophetic of the number of conquests she was to make.

The eighth is just as likely and as reasonable as the seventh, and already public gossip is beginning to mark this and that man as the victim of next conquest. Her maiden name was Williams, and she has been successively Mrs. Traux, Mrs. Riggs, Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Pratt, and Mrs. Abbott. In every instance, save the first, she has married widowers, some of them with a good number of children, and on one occasion in her early married life she went to the alms-house and took therefrom three children and raised them. She never had any children of her own. All her life has been spent in this vicinity, and all her husbands were buried by the same undertaker.

A fortune is waiting for the man who will invent some simple fixture to prevent persons from rolling out from the top berths in sleeping cars. Accidents of this kind often happen, but are never reported. Within three weeks a man has died from the effects of a fall in a car coming into this city, and a child had a narrow escape from a similar fate on the same line, tumbling on its head, but sustaining no serious injury. If the statistics on this point could be collected they would be alarming.—[Chicago Times.

FASHION FLASHES

And Other Items Which Especially Interest the Ladies.

Cashmere shawls are becoming more fashionable again.

One of the late Wm. M. Hunt's two daughters is studying art in Germany.

Boston opens its Art Museum on Sundays. Decorous spectators attend in large numbers.

The most fashionable handkerchiefs for neckwear are in rich Persian colors in palm leaf designs.

The panier mantle is one of the newest designs in wraps, and is made of the handsomest materials.

Plaid satins in regular clan tartans and in fanciful combinations of colors are largely imported for parts of dresses.

The newest white lace fichu is made of seed-dotted net, with a plaited border of the same simply scalloped on the edge.

Some of the bonnets are very large and almost exactly the shape of the old-fashioned bonnets called the "scoop-shovel bonnets."

Lucie Zarate, the midget, and her father and mother sailed for Vera Cruz, Mexico, yesterday. The profits of their three years' visit amounted to $20,610.

Mahogany is again asserting its supremacy as the king of all the woods for furniture and architectural decoration, but it will never again be an absolute monarch.

Bandana plaid silks with much red and yellow are shown, and others have drab, pink or plum color for the foundation, on which rest the gayest bars and stripes.

A new lace, that comes in both black and white, is called "point d'esprit," and bids fair to be a formidable rival to the Breton lace. It will be much used in millinery

For traveling suits the dark tartans in soft twilled wool are worn again, and it is found the largest plaids are most popular, especially those that combine blue with green.

Worth makes the skirts of walking dresses a little longer behind than in front, instead of giving them the round shape that has been in vogue for some time.

The busy dry goods clerks complain of moneyless women who pester them with useless questions and complain if the poor fellows seem a trifle impatient with their natural tormentors.

The reason why ladies who indulge in archery do not make better shots is explained—their dresses are not loose enough at the waist and shoulders to give perfect freedom to their arms.

Full as bad as the eccentric fashion of wearing long black gloves with light dresses is the later one, inaugurated in France, of course, of wearing white boots with dark colored dresses.

New lawn hats are made of braided straw and have wide brims and high crowns. The trimmings are peculiar, the crown being worked with crewels in wild flowers or Japanese designs.

Among the novelties of the season at New York has been a reception at a swimming school for young ladies, with an exhibition of skill by the pupils whose sports recalled tales of the water nymphs.

While playing the organ in the native Japanese church at Yokohama, Mrs. Maclay, the wife of the pastor, bowed her head in an apoplectic fit, after which she was carried out of the church. She died in a few hours.

The prevalent style of buttons for dress-trimmings, in Paris, are large and flat, of chased silver, or bell-shaped in cut steel, and both of ancient designs. Frequently, on a simple dress of wool the buttons cost three or four times as much as the dress.

Banged hair gives the wearer an expression of doubt and uncertainty, as if she felt a little anxious less the thatch on her forehead might not be securely fastened, or that it might suddenly go back on her, and show something which ought not to be seen.

New smoked pearl buttons are exquisitely carved in curious and pretty designs, some bearing a tiny house surrounded with shrubbery; others a bird, a flower, or a branch with a tiny bird's-nest filled with eggs. All of these are finely cut to show the variety of tints in smoked pearl.

The new wool goods are pliable and of light weight, yet give the effect of thick, heavy fabrics. For plain costumes made entirely of one fabric, there are cloth-like "suitings," with indistinct threads, lines and checks of many colors mingled, and presenting the effect of self-colored stuffs.

The use of satin has brought into vogue again lustrous silks with satin finish for the principal parts of the dress. Some of the richest Parisian costumes for the winter are made of black satin de Lyon, which is silk with a satin-finished surface so closely woven that the reps can not be seen on the lustrous side.

In the rich trousseau of a fashionable bride lately married in Elmira, N. Y., was a chest of linen, sheets, pillow-cases, etc., etc., elaborately hem-stitched and embroidered by the hands of the bride's mother, also a superb bed-cover and pillow-shams of finest Irish guipure lace, wrought entirely by the deft fingers of the same accomplished lady.

The jet trimming on imported black dresses invoiced at twenty-seven dollars a yard consist of fringe of granulated beads, with lace-like heading. Sometimes this forms a vest of jet, or a great Directoire collar, or perhaps a guimpe, and there are jet tabliers of embroidery on net that will cover the entire front breadth of black satin dresses.

In Paris, no evening toilette, whether for the theater or concert, is now made with long sleeves. All sleeves of dresses designed for the evening end quite near the elbow, and are edged with pleated lace. In consequence of this, extremely long gloves, fastened with ten buttons at least, are in vogue, it being considered inelegant to show the bare arm.

At a recent society wedding in a Brooklyn church, the bride, a blonde, wore a handsome costume of garnet damasse and satin, elaborately trimmed with a deep fringe, composed of garnet and steel beads, interwoven with chenille of the former color, which made a beautiful effect. The bonnet was of garnet-colored velvet and satin and ostrich plumes.

The striped brocades remain in great favor, together with most striped fabrics, which are becoming generally known as pekins; thus there are silks with brocaded satin stripes, and satins with stripes of brocaded velvets; sometimes only one color is represented, but the newest and richest brocades have the various colors combined in India and Persian cashmeres.

It is the opinion of a New York tailor whose specialty is woolen garments for women, that "a lady never looks so well as in a plain, perfectly-fitting cloth body, avoiding all unnecessary trimmings of every kind." He says everything, however, depends on an absolutely perfect and artistic fit, and this alone will make tailors' costumes for ladies as fashionable in America as they now are in Europe.

A Paris letter says that this season there will be no radical changes in the principal features of the toilette, but numerous modifications in the details. The walking dress, that for the street, which is seen by all, grows more and more simple, and even austere, with a very pronounced masculine character. Dresses for receptions, dinners, and the drawing-room are complicated, and are reaching a degree of bizarrerie and oddity such as Parisian taste has never approached before. Shapes, stuffs and ornaments showing all the historical styles, combinations of colors and shades which no one hitherto has ever ventured to associate—such is the character of French fashion, and its temerity seems to have reached the limits which separate it from extravagance.

Worth sends short costumes of black satin de Lyon with gay brocaded velvet basques and trimmings. Harper's Bazar says the skirts of his walking dresses are slightly pointed behind, and although the foundation remains narrow, a full effect is given by outside drapery. This foundation or lining is of inexpensive black silk with a deep knife-pleating of satin de Lyon around the bottom. Then, instead of a separate overskirt, the drapery of satin de Lyon is sewed in with the belt, and consists of four long full straight breadths, shirred up each seam, and trimmed down each seam with gay brocaded satin in Cashmere colors. Silk fringe tied in the hem trims the front and side breadths, while that behind, which is very much fuller, has a deep knife-pleating like the flounce below it. A cluster of black satin loops showing old gold lining at the end of the lengthwise bands of brocade.

The English Drink Bill.

[Edinburg Review.]

The national drink bill is a very alarming document; and, though subject to fluctuations, it increased most rapidly during the period of prosperity which followed the year 1869. It rose from £112,885,603 in that year to £147,-288,759 in 1876; or, put in another way, the expenditure per head rose from £3 16s. to £4 9s. During the last two years of commercial depression this amount has been reduced by £5,000,000 a year, but it still exceeds £142,000,000. The whole of this enormous expenditure, however, must not be attributed to increased intemperance. A large proportion (Prof. Leone Levi calculates four-fifths) represents the moderate consumption of the temperate.

Higher wages and increased incomes enabled all classes to live better, and to consume a larger amount of the luxuries and the necessaries of life. The consumption of tea, coffee, and sugar increased more rapidly than that of beer and spirits. It is calculated that the consumption of sugar per head rose from 33.11 pounds in 1860 to 59 pounds in 1876; of tea, from 2.67 pounds in 1860 to 4.50 pounds in 1876; and during the same period the consumption of spirits, rose from 0.93 gallons to 1.27 gallons; of malt, from 1.45 bushels to 2 bushels per head. The statistics, therefore, though they represent the amount of drinking, are not an accurate measure of the amount of drunkenness which prevails.

The Police returns are not more trustworthy guides. The number of persons apprehended for drunkenness was 100,-357 in 1867; 131,870 in 1870 and 203,989 in 1875; so that in nine years the numbers were more than double. If all other causes were constant, this enormous increase might be taken as a proof that the character of the population had deteriorated; but these statistics are affected not only by alterations in the law, but also by a number of circumstances which vary at different times and in different localities. We will quote two cases to explain our meaning: The towns of Birmingham and Manchester have about the same poulation, but yet the number of apprehensions for drunkenness in 1876 was in Manchester 9,612; in Birmingham only 2,824.

It is scarcely probable that the iron-workers of Birmingham are much more sober than the cotton spinners at Manchester, but it appears that the former town covers a larger area than the latter. In the one case every policeman has to watch over 16 acres and 661 persons; in the other he has only 5 acres and 442 persons. The disproportion will, to a great extent, account for the apparent sobriety of Birmingham. Mr. Chamberlain, in in his evidence, somewhat significantly says: "The statistics of Birmingham might to-morrow be made ten times as bad as they were before; just one turn of the screw would bring in ten times the number."